

Message Text

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EXDIS

DEPT PASS AMBASSADOR GREENWALD

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, EEC

SUB: THE ALLIANCE, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND
THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS-OIL

REF: USNATO 5191

1. SUMMARY. A SUGGESTION FOR TARGETING OUR
CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH EUROPE AND, IN PARTICULAR,
TESTING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OIL ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. WHILE THIS MISSION IS LESS WELL-INFORMED ON
RECENT EVENTS THAN USNATO, WE WOULD ENDORSE AN EFFORT
CLEARLY TARGET OUR CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH
EUROPE AND DETERMINE WHICH OF THESE RESULT FROM
DIFFERING ASSESSMENTS OF INTERESTS AND WHICH ARE DUE TO AN
INSUFFICIENCY IN OUR COMMUNICATIONS WITH EACH
OTHER. VIEWED FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, WE BELIEVE
THAT THE ABSENCE OF A THROUGH DISCUSSION ON THE OIL
ISSUE BETWEEN OURSELVES AND EUROPE HAS
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CONTRIBUTED TO POSITIONS TAKEN BY EUROPEAN
GOVERNMENTS WHICH APPEAR AS FUNDAMENTAL POLICY
DIFFERENCES; WHEREAS, WITH THE PROBABLE EXCEPTION
OF FRENCH VIEWS, THESE DIFFERENCES MAY STEM

RATHER FROM UNCERTAINTY ABOUT MUTUAL SUPPORT
IN AN EVENTUAL OIL CRISIS.

3. WE WERE SURPRISED THAT NEITHER THE EUROPEANS
NOR OUR DELEGATION AT THE OECD HLG MEETING LAST
WEEK APPEARED TO DESIRE AN IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION
OF THE OIL SHARING PROBLEM. AND YET IT SEEMS
TO US THAT THIS LIES AT THE HEART OF MOST
EUROPEAN POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES ON THE MIDDLE
EAST. WE COULD EXPECT EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS TO
TAKE MORE RISKS WITH THEIR EVENTUAL OIL SUPPLIES
IF WE HAD A COMMON UNDERSTANDING AND STRATEGY
FOR DEALING WITH SHORTAGES. WE SENSE THAT THE
RELUCTANCE TO DEAL FORTHRIGHTLY WITH THIS
ISSUE EXISTS ON BOTH SIDES. THE EUROPEANS KNOW
THAT THIS TIME, IN CONTRAST TO 1967, WE CANNOT
SIMPLY BAIL THEM OUT WITHOUT LIMITING OUR OWN CONSUMPTION.
ON THE US SIDE, THERE MAY BE A TEMPTATION TO GO IT ALONE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, SOME CONCRETE EVIDENCE THAT THE
UNITED STATES IS PREPARED TO MAKE SACRIFICES
TO MATCH EUROPEAN RISKS MIGHT HAVE A
SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON STIFFENING SPINES HERE
ABOUT.

4. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THE OIL MATTER HAS NOT
BEEN ADDRESSED IN THE NATO CONSULTATIONS. PERHAPS
THE TIME HAS COME. THE DUTCH MAY SOON TEST EC
SOLIDARITY ON THIS ISSUE. FOR ALL OF US IT IS
CERTAINLY A CASE OF HANGING TOGETHER OR
SEPARATELY. WE SUGGEST THAT WE GET AT LEAST
SOME OF OUR CARDS ON THE TABLE SO THAT OTHERS
MAY MORE ACCURATELY JUDGE WHERE THEY--AND WE--
REALLY STAND. TO THE EXTENT THE EUROPEAN
CONCERN ABOUT SUPPORTING US FROM HERE ON OUT ON
THE MIDDLE EAST IS DUE TO FEARS ABOUT OIL SUPPLY,
A US WILLINGNESS TO SHARE CAN HELP EASE THOSE
CONCERNS. TO THE EXTENT OIL HAS BEEN A PRETEXT,
SECRET

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THAT AT LEAST IS WORTH SMOKING OUT.
HARTMAN

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